# *Combat & Operational Stress Control (C/OSC) Transition Brief*

**CDR Shelly Scheibeler, CHC, USN**

**Unclassified**

# Overview and Purpose

- Review the Operational Stress Continuum (Ready, Reacting, Injured, or Ill)
- Self-assess eight important areas of life and function
- Learn how to improve these areas of life and function
- Learn how and where to get help when needed

# Stress vs. Traumatic Stress

- **Normal response to abnormal circumstances?**
- **Reactions and responses**
  - Promote survival in combat
  - Get you arrested in civilian life
- **Acute and appropriate reactions?**
- **Trauma?**
- **Or merely exhaustion?**

- **That is what this brief is all about…**
- **To help you sort this out.**

# Common Areas of Stress After Deployment

## Environment

Traffic
Crowds
Money
Alcohol
Security
Aggressive Driving
Aggression
Control
Hyper-vigilence

## Thinking/Feeling

Boredom
Routine
Disillusionment
Thrill Seeking
Irritability
Anger
Guilt
Shame
Hatred

## Spirituality

Understanding Why
Loss of Trust in Others
Loss of Trust in Self
Loss of Trust in higher power

## Relationships

Spouse
Children
Friends
Growth/Change
Conflict
Irritability
Anger
Detachment
Withdrawal
Control

# Stress Continuum Model

Stressor

| READY (Green) | REACTING (Yellow) | INJURED (Orange) | ILL (Red) |
|---|---|---|---|
| • Good to go<br>• Well trained<br>• Prepared<br>• Fit and focused<br>• Cohesive units & ready families | • Distress or impairment<br>• Mild and temporary<br>• Anxious, irritable, or sad<br>• Physical or | • More severe or persistent distress or impairment<br>• May leave lasting memories, | • Stress injuries that don't heal without help<br>• Symptoms persist for >60 days, get worse, |

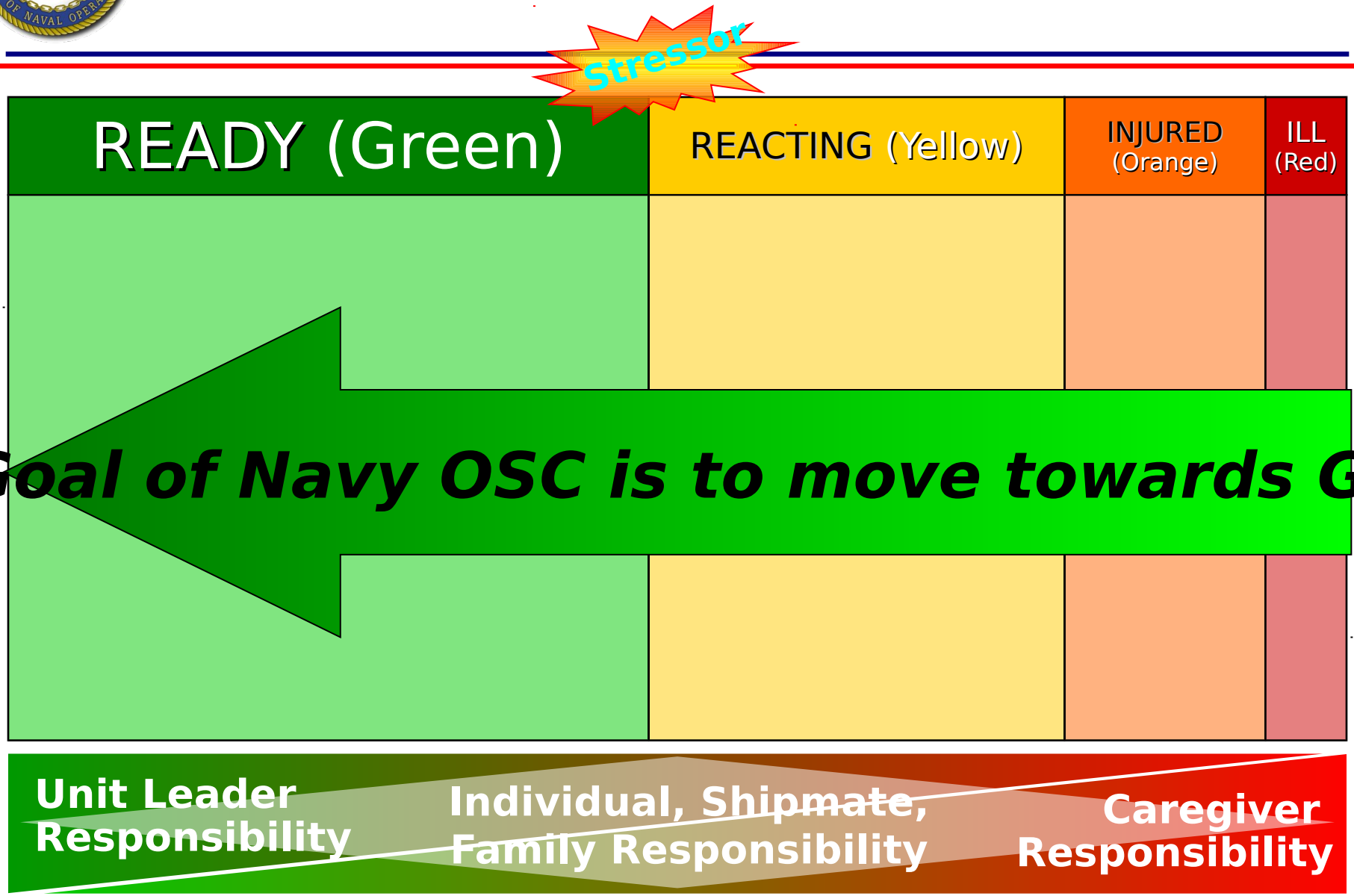
Unit Leader & Ready Responsibility

Individual, Shipmate, Family Responsibility

Caregiver Responsibility

ns and then

# Stress Continuum Model

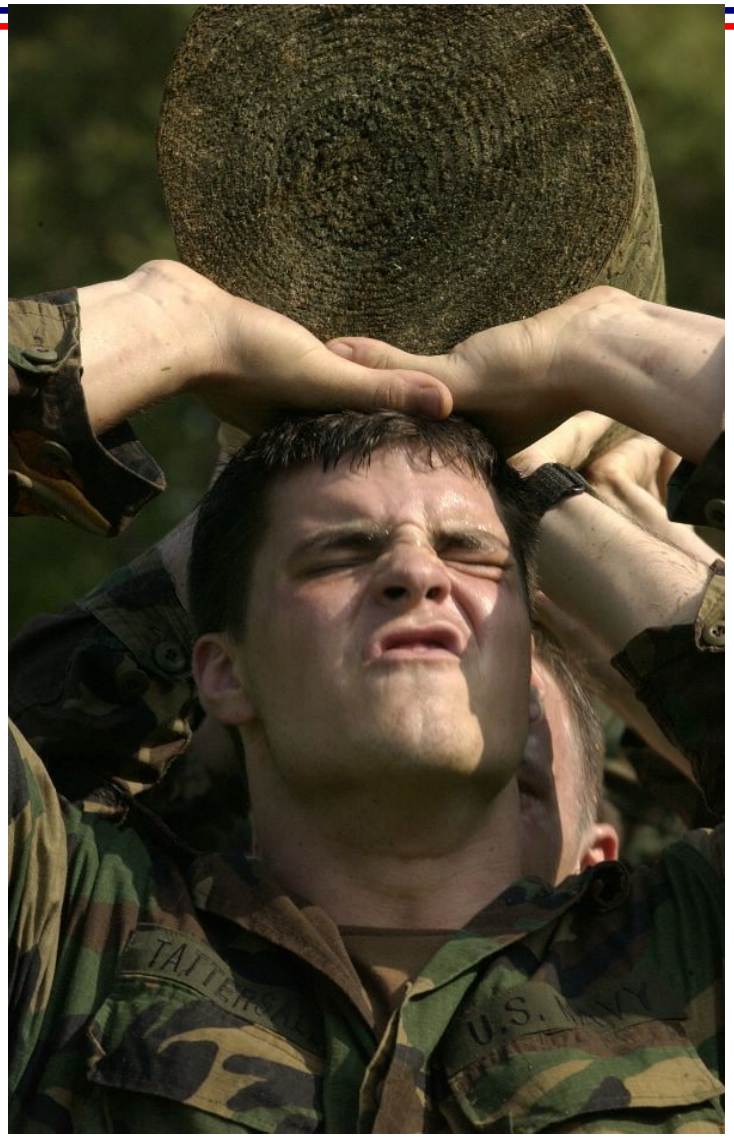


# What is a "Stress Reaction"?

**"STRESS REACTION"**

- Temporary, mild physical or mental distress

# Recognizing Stress: The Yellow Reacting Zone



## REACTING

Sailors:

- Feeling anxious, irritable, worrying
- Cutting corners on the job
- Poor diet or trouble sleeping
- Apathy, loss of interest

# Recognizing Stress: The Yellow Reacting Zone

## REACTING

**Families:**

- **Children having trouble in school**
- **Fighting more amidst siblings**
- **Couple not communicating effectively**
- **Family time compromised**
- **Reduced intimacy**

# What Are "Stress Injuries"?

**"STRESS INJURIES"**

- Wounds to the mind or brain caused by intense or prolonged stress
  - **Impact → Trauma**
  - **Wear and Tear → Fatigue**
  - **Loss → Grief**
  - **Inner conflict → Injury to core beliefs**

# Stress Outcome Spectrum: Reactions Versus Injuries

## Stress Reactions

- Common
- Always temporary
- Mild distress or loss of function
- Self-correcting

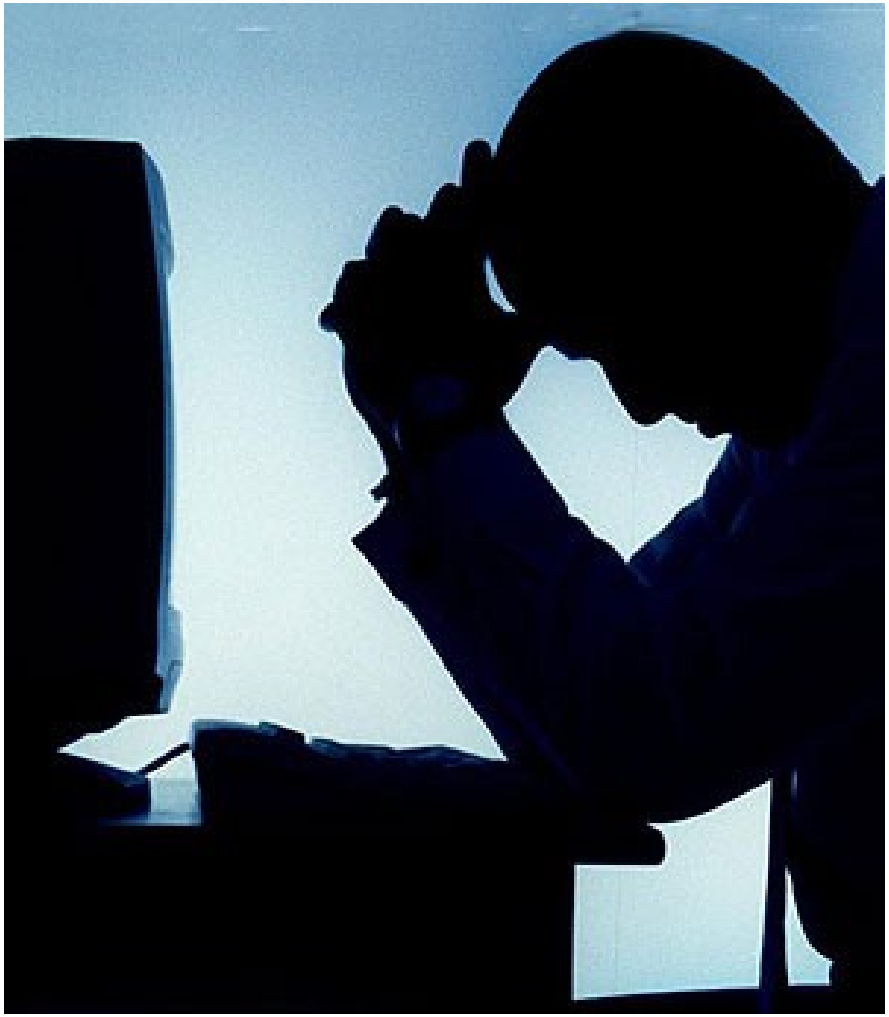
## Stress Injuries

- Less common
- May leave a scar
- More severe distress or loss of function
- May heal faster with help

# Recognizing Stress Injuries: The Orange Injured Zone

## INJURED

- Loss of control
- Can't fall or stay asleep
- Recurrent vivid nightmares
- Intense guilt or shame
- Attacks of panic or rage
- Inability to enjoy activities
- Disruption of moral values
- Serious suicidal or homicidal thoughts



# Recognizing Stress Injuries: The Orange Injured Zone

## INJURED FAMILIES

- Children having failing grades
- Children having discipline problems at school and/or home
- Couple experiencing loss of closeness/intimacy
- Feeling of chaos
- Constant fighting
- Silence/no communication
- Verbal or physical abuse

# Recognizing Stress Illnesses: The Red Ill Zone

## ILL

- Stress injury symptoms that last for more than 60 days
- Symptoms that get worse over time instead of better
- Symptoms that get better for awhile but then come back worse

***All** stress Illnesses MUST be referred to Medical for evaluation*

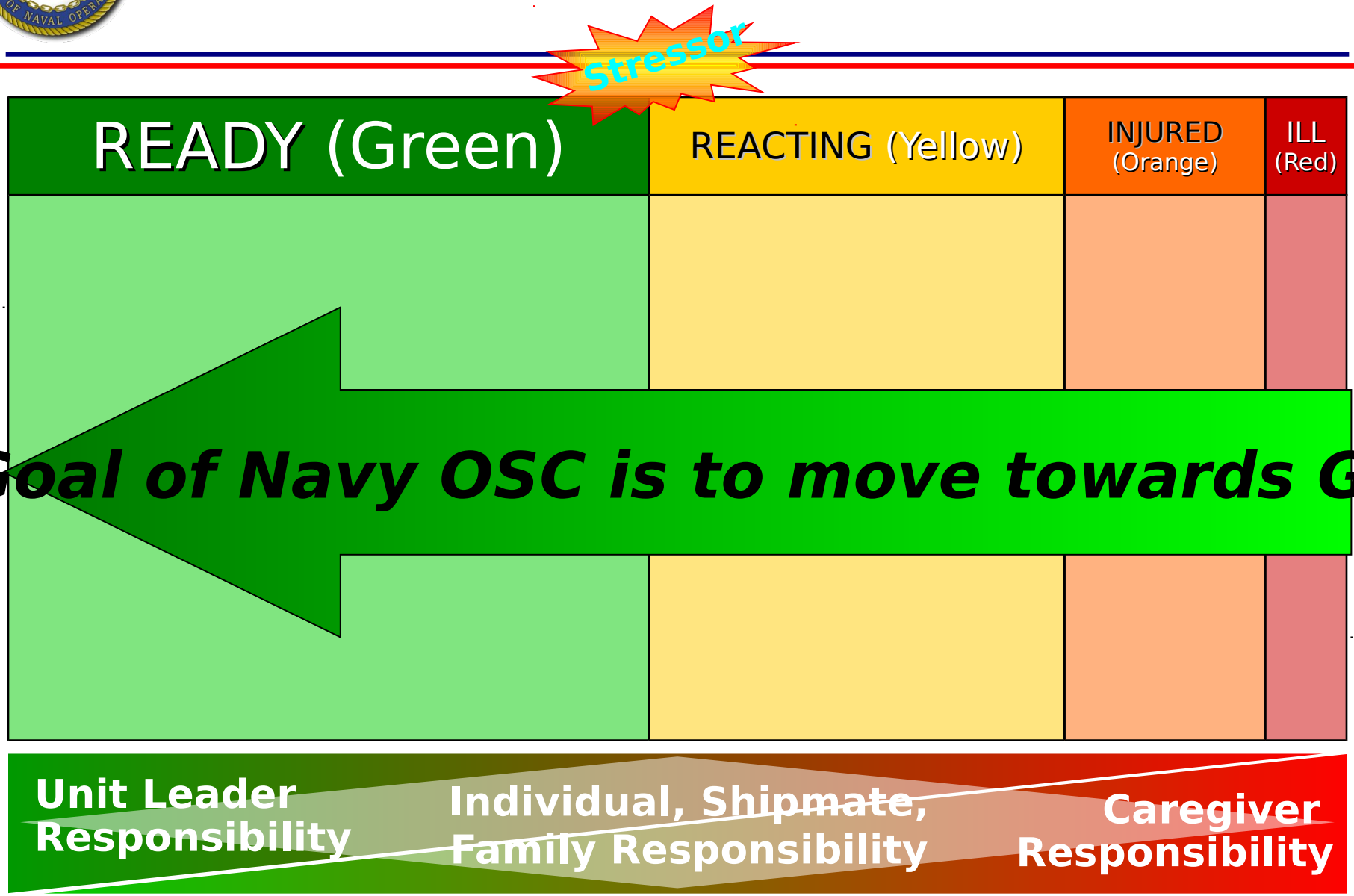
# Recognizing Stress Illnesses: The Red Ill Zone

## ILL

- Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
- Anxiety and Panic Disorders
- Severe Depression
- Uncontrollable rage, panic, loss of emotional control

- ISSUE: Look alikes: TBI, infections, severe dehydration

# Stress Continuum Model



# Post-Deployment Self-Assessment

1. Relationships
2. Substance use and abuse

# 1. Relationships

***Spouse, significant other, family, friends***

| Okay | Needs Work | Needs Help |
| --- | --- | --- |
| | | |

# 1. Relationships

***Spouse, significant other, family, friends***

| Okay | Needs Work | Needs Help |
|---|---|---|
| ❑ Good communication<br>❑ Feeling close<br>❑ Looking forward to seeing<br>❑ Cooperating well<br>❑ Playing well<br>❑ Good sex<br>❑ Good conversation<br>❑ Affection<br>❑ Openness<br>❑ Responsiveness | ❑ Trouble communicating<br>❑ Occasional fights and disagreements<br>❑ Uncomfortable being together<br>❑ Not having fun<br>❑ Staying apart<br>❑ Difficult or rare sex<br>❑ Complaints from partner<br>❑ Ambivalence<br>❑ Guardedness | ❑ Poor comm.<br>❑ Frequent fighting<br>❑ Dreading contact<br>❑ Emotional coldness<br>❑ No sex<br>❑ Irresolvable conflict<br>❑ Criticism<br>❑ Contempt<br>❑ Defensiveness<br>❑ Emotionally numb |

# 4. Substance Use/Abuse

***Tobacco, alcohol, drugs, sugars, fats***

| Okay | Needs Work | Needs Help |
|---|---|---|
| | | |

# 4. Substance Use/Abuse

***Tobacco, alcohol, drugs, sugars, fats***

| Okay | Needs Work | Needs Help |
|---|---|---|
| ❑ **Good control over intake of alcohol**<br>❑ **Not tempted to use drugs**<br>❑ **Not smoking chewing more**<br>❑ **Nobody who knows you thinks you are abusing** | ❑ **Others express concern over drinking**<br>❑ **Got drunk when didn't intend to**<br>❑ **Use alcohol to get to sleep**<br>❑ **Drinking is getting in the way**<br>❑ **Smoking or chewing more** | ❑ **Anger when others complain about drinking**<br>❑ **Lying to keep drinking**<br>❑ **Hiding drinking**<br>❑ **Harm to life from alcohol**<br>❑ **Using illegal drugs**<br>❑ **Blackouts**<br>❑ **Frequent drinking to intoxication** |

# Self-Assessment Summary

| | Okay | Needs Work | Needs Help |
|---|---|---|---|
| Relationships | **Open Communication** | **Tension** | **Coldness or Fighting** |
| Work function | **Effective** | **Indifferent** | **Hostile environment** |
| Public behavior | **Patient, calm** | **Aggressive, irritable** | **Risky, hostile** |
| Substance abuse | **Not an issue** | **Could be an issue** | **Is an issue** |
| Money and finances | **Under control** | **Financial worries** | **Financial trouble** |
| Physical and mental health | **Healthy and fit** | **Indifferent** | **Disturbing thoughts, feelings** |
| Roles in life | **Balanced, comfortable** | **Out of balance** | **Pulled apart** |
| Spirituality | **Connected, peaceful** | **Something's missing** | **Empty, lack of "moral compass"** |

# Resources and Tools: Security Clearance Issues

One of the most frequently cited reasons for not seeking help: "I don't want to lose my security clearance."

- **Revised Security Questionnaire:**

**"Mental health counseling in and of itself is not a reason to revoke or deny a clearance.**

**In the last 7 years, have you consulted with a health care professional regarding an emotional or mental health condition or were you hospitalized for such a condition?**

**Answer "No" if the counseling was for any of the following reasons and was not court-ordered:**

**-strictly marital, family, grief not related to violence by you;**

**-strictly related to adjustments from service in a military combat environment."**

# Barriers to Successful Integration

- **Avoidance**
  - Numbing and withdrawal
  - Response to intense emotions
  - Response to shame and guilt
- **Alienation**
  - From those who had not shared their experience
  - Feeling of being misunderstood
- **Personal meaning**
  - Unique effect of traumatic event

# Where To Get Help

- **Shipmate, family member, or command leadership**
- **Ombudsman; Chaplain**
- **Fleet and Family Support Center counselor**
- **Doctor, nurse or other medical staff member**
- **Naval Center for Combat and Operational Stress Control (*www.nccosc.navy.mil)***
- **USMC COSC (www.usmc-mccs.org/cosc)**
- **Navy Safe Harbor (*www.safeharbor.navy.mil*)**

# Where To Get Help

- **Military OneSource (*www.militaryonesource.com*)**
- **Vet Center (http://www.vetcenter.va.gov)**
- **After deployment (*afterdeployment.org*)**
- **Military Mental Health: 877-877-3647 or visit (www.militarymentalhealth.org)**
- **Military Homefront (http://militaryhomefront.dod.mil)**
- **Military Health (http://health.mil**
- **http://www.dcoe.health.mil/**

# Questions?

Unclassified